

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

AREA	FORM NO.
K	433



City Lexington

Address 16 Forest Street

Historic Name First Church of Christ

Scientist _____

Present church

Original kindergarten

DESCRIPTION:

Age c. 1900 1899

Source Minuteman, Sept 1, 1899

Style Beaux Arts, simplified

Architect remodeled by Willard Brown 1918

Exterior wall fabric stucco

Outbuildings _____

Major alterations (with dates) remodeled
(1918)

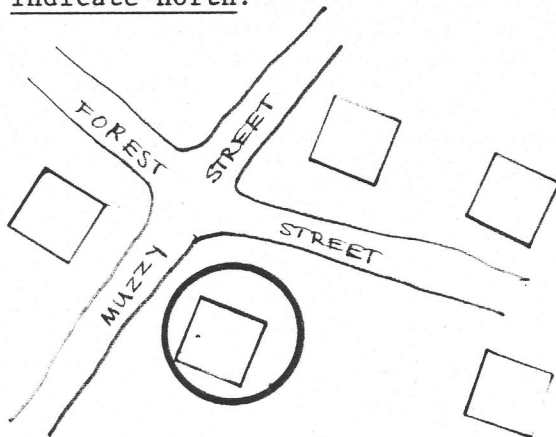
Moved _____ Date _____

Approx. acreage 37635 ft.²

Setting Residential street developed in
the late nineteenth century and early
twentieth century; Lexington High School
property is visual perimeter to the rear.

SKETCH MAP

Show property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection. Indicate north.



Recorded by Anne Grady

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date April, 1984

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.)

This is an example of local architect, Willard Brown, working in a simplified Beaux Arts style. The most prominent feature of the design is the two-story recessed entrance with arched ceiling. The arch is embellished with panelled trim and there are columns in antis at the entry. The elements of the building's design are classical, but are combined with Brown's usual creative sense into a highly individualistic building. He makes use, for example, of the flattened ellipse form, of which he was so fond, for windows over the entry and on the sides of the building.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.)

About 1900, a kindergarten was established and before 1906 it occupied this building. The building was remodeled in 1918 and dedicated as a Christian Science Church that same year.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher)

Worthen, Edwin B. A Calendar History of Lexington, Massachusetts 1620-1946,
p. 114. Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Savings Bank, 1946.

1906 atlas

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
LEXINGTON

Property Address
16 FOREST ST

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

K	433
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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

A brief mention appearing in the *Lexington Minute-Man* on September 1, 1899, confirms the construction of the original building on this site in that year.

Monday ground was broken for a little building on Forest street, near its junction with Muzzey street, for Miss Theodora Robinson's kindergarten. The location is convenient to the centre of the town and will doubtless prove a successful venture. Mr. A. C. Washburn has the contract for putting up the building which will be pushed to an early completion.

Another mention in 1904 chronicles the success of the kindergarten:

The Forest street kindergarten has completed the second week of the fall term. An attractive group of young children are under Miss Theodora Robinson's care and training, relieving parents of no little care and responsibility in starting them in the path of discipline and learning (*Minute-Man*, Oct. 15, 1904).

The daughter of Theodore Parker Robinson, Theodora Margaret Robinson (b. 1875) married Rev. George Ballard, rector of the Church of Our Redeemer in 1911. The "Kindergarten Hall" was used by members of the Christian Science church as early as 1906.

The renovated building was dedicated on June 30, 1918. At the time of the dedication of the First Church of Christ Scientist, architect Willard D. Brown provided the newspaper with a description of the building:

In view of the quiet and constant manner in which the membership first of the Society, and then of the Church has increased, it is peculiarly appropriate that the the new Church Edifice should be an actual outgrowth of the former modest structure that served so well as the Church home.

The shingled walls have given place, to stucco, and the simple porch of the earlier building has become a glorified arch supported on slender columns and approached by a broad flight of brick steps, flanked on either side by buttresses bearing tall bronze lamp standards. The main entrance, of classic design, is surmounted by a tympanum of Grueby tiles bearing the inscription: "First Church of Christ Scientist".

Broad double doors open into the ample foyer extending across the entire front of the building, on one end of which is a coat room also a broad flight of stairs leading to the Sunday School rooms I the basement, additional access to which is gained by a side entrance off the landing half way down.

Directly opposite the main entrance two pairs of leather covered doors open from the foyer into the auditorium capable of seating about 200 people, lighted by groups of mullioned windows affording pleasant glimpses of wood and meadow land outside, and crowned by an arched ceiling supported on paneled beams and cornices. In an arched niche opposite the entrance is the rostrum with its high wainscots surmounted by the organ screen. Here are the Readers' desks, paneled doors at the back giving access to their private rooms and to the Musicians' room, all directly in the rear. On either side of the rostrum are doorways, the one on the left opening into the Directors' room, that on the right to an emergency stairway leading to the outside as well as to the Sunday School room under. This is a large room, some 30 x 40 feet in size, with a large primary class room about 15 x 21 opening out of it. Owing to the slope of the land these rooms are completely out of ground and are exceptionally well lighted with groups of mullioned windows on either side.

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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

In addition to the alcove, the basement contains a large coat room equipped with racks, etc. for the young people, a small room for the work of literature distribution, and a toilet room off the front stair landing. In addition, there are two heater rooms with [provision for coal storage, etc., one containing a vapor heating plant and the other a hot air furnace, thus providing a heating and ventilating system at one flexible, economical and capable.

The woodwork of the entire first floor is finished in a soft gray tone harmonizing with the rough scoured plaster walls and providing together with the dark stained floors, a most quiet and pleasing effect. The basement rooms are stained a soft and satisfying shade of brown.

The grounds have been well laid out and already present a beautiful lawn with shrubs and evergreens bordering the building (*Lexington Minute-Man*, July 6, 1918).

According to the Department of Public Safety Records at the Massachusetts State Archives, an addition or alterations to the building were completed in 1955 according to designs by Boston architect Arland Dirlam.

In recent years the former church has been converted to a residence.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Dept. of Public Safety, Division of Inspection, Plan Records, Mass. State Archives.

Hudson, Charles, *History of the Town of Lexington*, vol. II. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913, p. 587.

Lexington Minute-Man, September 1, 1899; Oct. 15, 1904; July 6, 1918.

Supplement prepared by:
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